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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

10 June 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR : [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT : Agreements on Project CORONA and Project ARGON

1. We have had considerable difficulty in the past locating the original authorizations for the above Projects, principally because these were fairly closely held, and such papers as may have existed on CORONA, for example, appear never to have been more than a memorandum for the record by General Goodpaster in the White House. In contrast to Project [REDACTED] and Project OXCART where formal agreements were signed between the Agency and the Air Force, the allocation of responsibilities for CORONA was the end product of a meeting in the White House with the President on 15 April 1958. As near as we can reconstruct it, responsibility was assigned by oral agreement there to the Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense, for general management of the basic vehicle development; to the Air Force Ballistic Missiles Division (now Space Systems Division, AFSC) for detailed technical supervision of vehicle development and operations; and to CIA for black development and procurement of reconnaissance equipment and for management of collection requirements, security, cover, and operations.

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2. There is a record on the division of responsibilities for Project ARGON, but we are at present unable to locate the original memorandum. Recent research, however, revealed that on 7 July 1959 Mr. Roy W. Johnson, Director, ARPA, and Mr. Richard M. Bissell, CIA Project Director co-signed a memorandum delineating the Agency responsibilities for Project ARGON. In that memorandum it was agreed that "In order to obtain maximum security, it is essential that CIA exercise control of ARGON; this control to range from complete control in such areas as security and cover to joint control with ARPA in other areas such as the direction of the technical aspects of the project, including payload and 117L vehicle and systems -- the CIA-DPD Control Center

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will be the central location for operational control -- political approvals for ARGON launches will be the responsibility of CIA with DOD support, and with ARPA providing technical justification for flights -- ARPA and CIA will maintain joint technical control throughout the operational phases of the ARGON program.

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Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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